This is a very timely book about European Muslims’ well-being, written by two American social scientists: a sociologist, Pamela Irving Jackson, and a political scientist, Peter Doerschler. Drawing on official and non-official data sets from the UK, the Netherlands, France and Germany, the authors find that the well-being of European Muslims requires that the current civic integration policy adopted by all four countries is abandoned and replaced with full implementation of equal opportunities and civil rights. Implicitly, the book explains why xenophobic and Islamophobic parties and activists are nearly always also EU-phobic. As the authors point out, the EU defines social integration as a \textit{two-way accommodation} between public institutions and ‘minorities’, here Muslims, which contrasts with the premises of civic integration and the new ‘citizenship contracts’ which place the responsibility for accommodation on the individual migrant. Hence, the authors advocate the view that integration policy should be moved from the current national levels up to the EU-level, to ensure equal opportunities and civil rights for all. These arguments are developed through the successive chapters, and supported by the authors’ data analysis. Together, the data sets and analysis, illustrated through tables and diagrams, make for an accessible and well-documented study.

In Chapter 1, the authors define their aim, sources and method. The aim reads as follows:

\begin{quote}
Our goal is to examine disparities between Muslims and others in Europe to provide a basis for reducing the polarizations that prevent full utilization of the talents of members of the religious minority. We seek to demonstrate the utility of the \textit{benchmarking} (my italics) process in promoting member states’ capacity for integration as defined by the European Parliament (2007:73) in its benchmarking report: ‘a society’s ability to integrate all its members into new arrangements of active citizenship that ensure the long-term well-being of all in a diverse society’. (p. 24)
\end{quote}

Thus they highlight the importance that the EU assigns to ‘well-being’ for integration. ‘Benchmarking’ then means to establish where countries are on the road towards this objective, and what measures are required to reach the goal.

The four selected countries are some of the most powerful EU member states with the largest Muslim populations, which means that their policies have a
large impact both on other member states and on the well-being of European Muslims. Sources of data include both official and non-official bodies at the EU level, the European level, and country levels. The EU bodies are: the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS), European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). The non-EU European agencies include, among others, the European Social Survey (ESS), Open Society Institute: At Home in Europe/Muslims in Europe, and the Justice Initiative. National state-sponsored data bases for the UK, the Netherlands, France and Germany are also used. Here the authors point out that while the UK almost consistently applies ‘religion’ as a category in data gathering, France does not wish to register data according to citizens’ religious identity, which means that respondents’ religion has to be surmised from their national origins or ethnicity. Given the significance of religion for Muslims’ well-being (see below), the French data sets should be improved to include religion in order to meet the requirements of the EU’s benchmarking process.

With reference to the state-of-the-art in the research field of ‘Muslims’ integration’, the authors define their contribution as a shift of focus from immigration and security towards civil rights and equal opportunities (p. 6). The method focuses on comparing Muslims to non-Muslims in examining

- their experiences and attitudes relating to crime and justice, and their trust in public institutions as part of our consideration of the key area of life specified by the Council of Europe (2003:7) and the European Parliament (2007:139) in terms of basic public functions, defined as including equality, anti-discrimination, and self-organization. The key areas of culture and information are also considered here, through satisfaction with democracy, evaluation of democracy as an idea, and understanding of the agencies of the government. (p. 9)

Chapter 2 investigates to what extent each state has a unique method of coordinating state identity and ethnic identity, and to what extent such methods correspond with different scopes of the nation-state in minority integration, and Muslims’ ability to find a comfortable place in society.

First, the authors show that any differences between the four selected countries play out within the framework of a common European strategy: “Rather than simply legislating equal access to (…) education, employment, or access to public facilities (…), European nations open state and social structures to minorities and immigrants only after they have met certain cultural gateways, or in order to ensure specific equality goals set by the state.’ (p. 27)